How Lecturer Cleared the Air After Emancipation Proclamation

Brilliant Irishman Had Promised Not to Mention Lincoln's Name—and He Didn't—but He Drew Frantic and Thunderous Applause by Reference to Great Liberator of Slaves.

The Man Who Managed Mason Jones's Tour Tells How at Tense Moment, When Execration and Admiration of President Were Struggling for Mastery, the Spell Was Broken.

By LEONARD GROVER.
Author of "Lincoln and the Theatre."

Note: Mr. Grover was manager of Grover's Theatre during Mr. Lincolns' administration.

ON February 12, 1863, the last birthday but two of Mr. Lincoln's life, he was one of the most heartily execrated persons in all the world. The fiat of the emancipation of the slaves had taken effect on January 1 preceding. His Cabinet was divided as to its expediency, and the feeling in Washington against Mr. Lincoln's extreme measure was most pronounced. This antipathy permeated all classes and all parties. It was an ever present topic of conversation, nor did many voices arise in his justification. Soldiers of the Union army were bitterly outspoken. "We did not enlist to free niggers!" they growled.

The immediate vicinity of my theatre, surrounded as it was by saloons of every grade, from the gilded palace to the dive of "knockout" drops, was perhaps the most violent in expressing this antipathy. The ruffian element of many regiments and cities gathered there. Scenes of violence with pistol and knife were of frequent occurrence. The provost guard had hitherto kept the neighborhood under measurable control, but, with the prevailing sentiment, the lid was off, and one heard not once, but countless times, "He ought to be killed."

Many friends of Mr. Lincoln's act were overawed, and knew not one man where the other stood. In the midst of this perturbed state there arrived an opportune event which was destined to cleave this atmosphere of doubt and to force each one into a showing of hands; by coincidence it occurred on Mr. Lincoln's fifty-fourth birthday.

It will readily be understood that there was no intention of observing the day. No one gave it thought, no newspaper mentioned it; such remembrance of it as existed was wholly in the President's household.

Mason Jones was a brilliant Irishman, educated at one of the English universities. He joined Garibaldi and went through all the Italian campaigns with him. He won distinction for bravery. He returned to Great Britain, where his eloquence gained him renown, and he was alluded to by the press and public as "the Irish Orator." He made a tour of the principal cities with a magnificent recital of the Garibaldian War and became the platform sensation of the hour. P. T. Barnum engaged him for a tour of America. He arrived at the epoch of the emancipation. His opinions on the subject of slavery were emphatic. He was frank and combative, with the courage of his convictions, and speedily became embroiled with a number of his compatriots.

Barnum found the contract too strenuous, and deftly set about transferring him to my shoulders. Beyond a general knowledge of his accepted brilliancy and eloquence, I knew little. His several quarrels with many Irish-Americans, while they had been pretty widely published, had escaped me, and—I became Mr. Barnum's victim.

I knew that I could procure for the "Irish Orator" a strong send-off at Washington, and at once arranged to bring him to that city. I engaged Willard's Hall, the most fashionable assembly room, made my announcements and invited the attendance of an audience of the highest possible class.

No sooner was Mason Jones's appearance announced than I was waited upon at the theatre by Colonel John Forney, the clerk of the Senate, with whom I held relations of the most amicable nature. After a general conversation over his customary julep he softly and pleasantly cautioned me, "Don't let your Mr. Jones say too much."

The morning I was to start for New York to bring my newly contracted star arrived, when again sauntering into the office came Colonel Forney. His appearance was ever the signal for the office boy to procure from Mitchell's nearby hostlery one of his famous juleps for which he had special hothouse mint.

The colonel was surely the most urbane of men. He dazzled me with happy praises of Mason Jones and the great treat he anticipated in listening to him, but again, in his most gracious manner, remarked: "Don't let him say too much."

I went on my errand, met Mr. Jones for the first time, and we became most pleasantly acquainted on the return trip. I housed him at Willard's. He was to make his appearance that evening. I started for the theatre to learn if all details had been attended to, where, awaiting my arrival in the office, was Colonel Forney. He brought his purpose to an early disclosure by again remarking, this time impressively:

"Grover, don't let your man Jones say too much."

I said: "Colonel, you must be frank with me. What is this that Mr. Jones must refrain from saying?"

And then it came out. He knew of Mason Jones's extreme views and the audacious manner in which he proclaimed them. A great many party leaders thought Mr. Lincoln had gone too far. Others indorsed him, but they were silent. No one knew where the other stood. It was a subject that ought not to be touched until time had softened the situation.

"Go now, and impress upon Mr. Jones the danger of discussing it," urged Forney.

It was known that most of the leaders, several of the Cabinet and many of the diplomatic corps were to be present. So, pushed at once upon this mission, I started for Willard's to prevail upon Mr. Jones "not to say too much."

During our long trip from New York the subject had never been broached.

As I entered Mr. Jones's apartment, of all people in the world whom should I find there but Cassius M. Clay. They were having a heart-to-heart talk, and the presence of the volume of refreshments on the table indicated that there was to be no speedy separation.

Cassius M. Clay, a Kentuckian and a nephew of Henry Clay, was widely known for his fearless diatribes against slavery. From the standpoint of physical courage he had few equals. He at all times preferred to talk to his enemies rather than to his friends. He was a strenuous candidate before the convention which nominated Mr. Lincoln.

General Clay had just returned from Russia, to which he had been sent as minister. I had first met him in Western New York during my preparatory days, where he was filling an engagement with the Lyceum Bureau. I had next met him when I was touring the country with a concert party at Maysville, Ky., where he had received a deputation from Fleming Court House, who came to warn him not to speak at that town.

His answer was: "I am announced; I shall come; I shall speak."

He was met at the outskirts of Fleming by a numerous body, who again warned him and threatened him with consequences should he persist. His answer was the same.

He came, he spoke, and after, at the hotel, he was attacked, but literally minced his assailant with his bowie.

It occurred to me that I was up against a pretty hard proposition in endeavoring to induce any one in Cassius Clay's company "not to say too much."

But it was necessary that I should do my diplomatic best. I mollified and partly won General Clay by recalling our former meetings, and then I attacked the subject with Mr. Jones in my most insinuating manner.

He responded: "I think I know what you want, Mr. Grover. I shall try to please you, and I pledge you my word that I will not mention Mr. Lincoln's name at all in addressing your audience to-night."

So with this assurance I left him, but I left with him Cassius Clay.

The audience at Willard's Hall was assembled. It was in truth a notable one. The Cabinet, the diplomatic corps and both houses and both parties were numerously represented. The President did not attend.

I had simply announced what I held to be the purpose of the occasion: "Mason Jones, the Irish orator, in his campaigns with Garibaldi." But in some manner it had grown to mean more than Garibaldi. It seemed evident that a demonstration on the great step just taken was anticipated. Few ladies were present.

Mr. Jones was introduced in a perfunctory manner by General Clay, was received with slight applause and plunged at once into his subject. He had a handsome, commanding presence, tall stature and an abundance of jet black hair. In appearance, though the better looking, he was remarkably like Dillon, the co-worker with Parnell, whom I saw later.

A calm, quiet recital followed of the various engagements in the Italian war, which was politely punctuated by occasional applause. An hour and half of this continued. The audience manifested interest, was attentive and all thought of the anticipated demonstration passed.

I sat, pleased, entertained in a mild sense, but I could not help asking myself, "Why the Irish orator?"

As the address was manifestly nearing its finish he began speaking in a more forcible manner about the great gift of political liberty which Garibaldi had brought to the Italian people. He dwelt on this significantly, and Colonel Forney, who was seated a few rows in front of me on the opposite side of the aisle, turned and, shaking his bushy head, gave me a meaning look, as though to say, "He's getting on dangerous ground."

Mr. Jones passed with growing force to liberty as a divine right, picturing it in fervid manner as the noblest attribute of manhood—freedom of thought, freedom of speech and action.

Colonel Forney turned to me again, and his face said plainly, "It is coming!"

It was in the air. All could feel it. Several of the speaker's periods under ordinary circumstances would have commanded vehement applause, but not a hand clapped. All sat with riveted attention waiting for that sentence which was surely coming, in which that now ringing voice would reach the great question of the day and which would force the silent onces into a showing of hands.

"And if the gift of liberty to a people who had the numbers and the power to right their own wrongs possessed such elements of benefit as the world accorded, what must it mean to the poor and lowly enslaved, powerless to break their chains or seek their freedom?"

A few rapid sentences and he reached his peroration:

"There are to-day babes born to a new era who will live to see written in the archives of history, engraved on the monuments of fame and lauded by the civilized world the name of that man who strikes the fetters from the slaves, who disenthralls a country—for the existence of slavery means enthralment to the slave and to the master—I say babes of to-day will live to see the world place the man who freed a country's slaves above the name of that country's father!"

It came like a shock.

An ominous silence prevailed while one might count three ticks of a clock.

Then one single pair of hands—but they meant so much, they were those of Lord Lyons, that scion of Exeter Hall, the British Minister—sounded the first note of applause.

The spell was broken.

Instantly every implement and physical organ that could convey applause was in violent action, hands, feet, canes, shouts—swelling and still swelling. Secretary Seward was shaking hands with Lord Lyons. The Russian Minister was clapping Chase on the shoulder, Forney was shouting, laughing and actually dancing; while loud above the ever swelling roar a stentorian voice, pitched in a piercing key and fired like a salute of artillery, pealed out,

"Hooray, by thunder!"

It came from a man of colossal stature, who was standing on one of the benches in the rear of the hall.

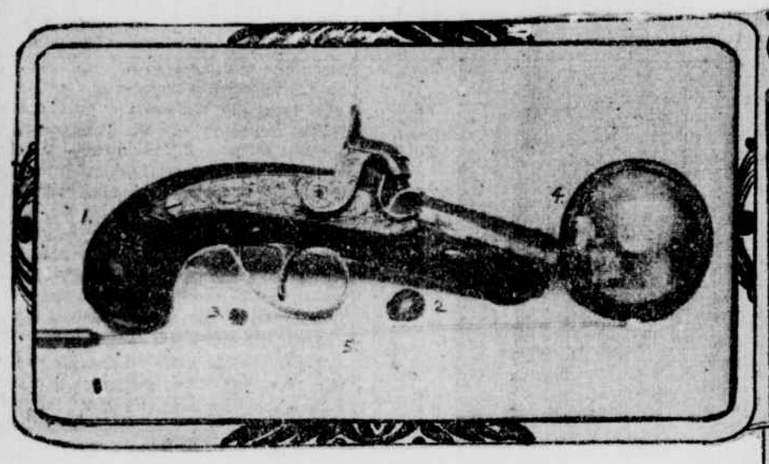
The gentleman with the voice was Hannibal Hamlin, the Vice-President of the United States.

It was over. The log-jam was broken—thanks to Mason Jones and Lord Lyons's hands. From that moment the President's friends knew where one another stood, and they marched forward shoulder to shoulder.

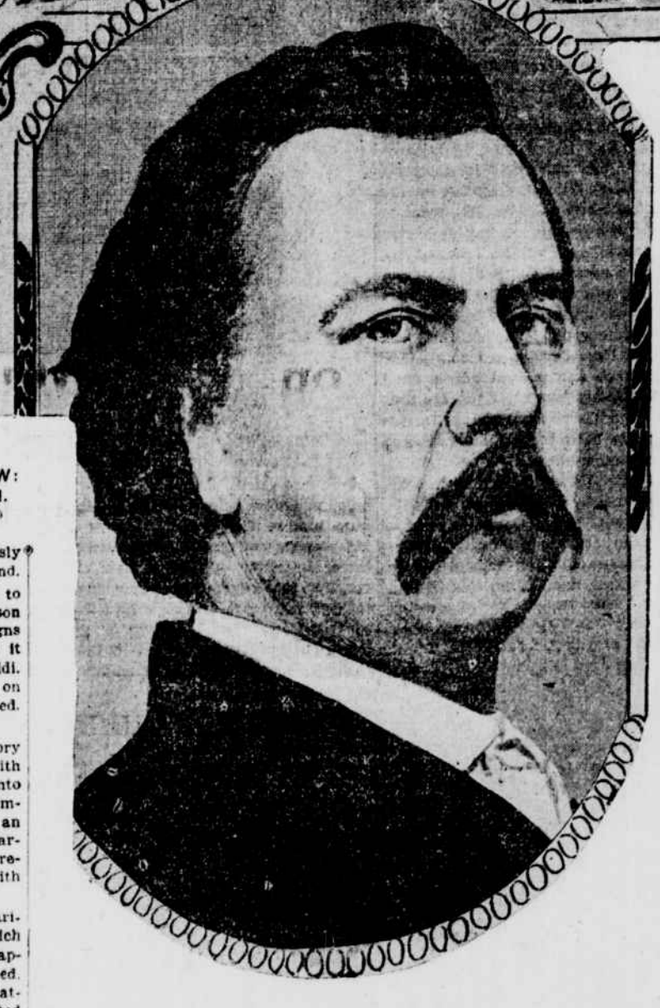
Mr. Jones had been true to his promise. He had not mentioned Mr. Lincoln's name, but——

The importance of this occurrence can scarcely be too much emphasized. It was, beyond denial, the explosion that shattered the ominous silence and forced all the great ones from ambush. A further continuation of the pre-existing state might have easily led to very different history.

I venture to express the opinion that, in face of the many overt acts and the bitterly antipathetic feeling of that land, the Emancipation Proclamation was the chief cause which kept England from granting belligerent rights to the Confederacy. Thus publicly challenged, she dared not shatter her own record by aiding in the continuation of slavery.



PISTOL WITH WHICH LINCOLN WAS SHOT.
(2) The bullet. (3) Percussion cap for pistol nipple. (4) Pieces of Lincoln's skull. (5) Probe used to explore wound. All preserved in custody of War Department, Washington.



ABOVE: ABRAHAM LINCOLN AS HE LOOKED IN 1861. BELOW: BOOTH LEAPING FROM THEATRE BOX AFTER SHOOTING LINCOLN.
(From an old print.)

LEONARD GROVER.
As he looked in 1863.

THE ASSASSINATION OF LINCOLN.
(From an old print.)

FEARED WATER.

Willis—Are those Kentucky horses you bought scared of autos?

Gillis—No, indeed. They never notice a train, either; but I can't get them used to a sprinkling cart to save my life!—Puck.

This Alabama Lawyer Will Train Democratic Guns Upon the Tariff in Next Congress

Oscar W. Underwood, of Birmingham, Ala., as Chairman of Ways and Means Committee, Will Be Called Upon to Father Many a "Popgun" Bill Bearing on Nation's Revenues.

BY JAMES B. MORROW.

A THEATRICAL phrase about thorns, sagaciously worked out before the occasion, but spoken with inspirational frenzy and suddenness, made the issue of 1896. McKinley, waiting and tuning his voice in his cottage among the trees of Canton, and Mark Hanna, commander in chief of the commissariat, supposed all discussion would centre on hard times and a protective tariff. They could not foresee the uplifted hand and the two defiant eyes, nor forehear the wild call to arms compressed into a few brief but maddening words.

No ingenious oratorical outburst, followed by an emotional explosion, will overturn the plans now being laid for the mighty campaign of 1912. The Democrats will storm the electorate with a single main issue—revenue reform. They will also, in passing, observe traditions and rebuke extravagance. There will be plenty of subsidiary questions—irrigation, immigration, the rights of labor, pensions, the Stars and Stripes, and so forth, eyeful and readable planks put in to ornament the platform. But a tariff for revenue, as against a tariff for protection, will be the one paramount subject of all stump speakers and party writers. The Democrats will attack. The Republicans will explain and defend.

The first session of the 62d Congress will convene in December this year. The House of Representatives will be Democratic, the Senate will be Republican, and Mr. Taft will still be President. If a Democratic tariff bill should pass the House and then the Senate with the help of about five insurgent Republicans, it could be vetoed by Mr. Taft, in which event it would be valuable only as a curiosity. Therefore, tariff legislation, started by the Democrats, is logically impossible until after the election of 1912, and will not be possible then unless the Republicans lose the Senate and the Democrats elect Governor Wilson, Governor Marshall, Governor Harmon or some one else to succeed Mr. Taft.

Nevertheless, the Democrats of the next House intend to pass a number of tariff bills, not with the expectation of changing or repealing the Payne-Aldrich law, but to provide themselves and their party with campaign arguments. The bills will strike at particular schedules—wool and cotton, for example—and will give Congressional orators opportunity to enumerate and describe the so-called iniquities of protection. The speeches will be circulated during the national campaign that is to follow and will be guides as to theory and fact for all spellbinders and editors throughout the country.

Tariff legislation, by a provision of the Constitution, must originate in the House of Representatives. The Committee on Ways and Means in that branch of Congress writes the bill, and the bill, as a matter of verbal convenience and general identification, is given the name of the chairman—thus, the Mills bill, the McKinley bill, the Wilson bill, the Dingley bill, and so on. Oscar W. Underwood, of Birmingham, Ala., has already been chosen as the chairman of the Ways and Means Committee of the 62d Congress.

There will not be an Underwood bill, however, because the present tariff law is to be attacked in spots. Instead, there will be a series of Underwood bills—popguns, Thomas B. Reed once called such measures, mingling wit with irreverence. The word Underwood, accordingly, will be heard all over the land for at least two years to come. And Underwood himself will be much discussed, both as a man and as a Democrat.

Geographically and industrially, Alabama sounds rather isolated and free tradish. New England, roaring with machinery, and the Middle West, alight with coke ovens and steel mills, are more suggestive of the statesmanship that promotes business. However, Mr. Underwood is no portly person in a long, loose coat and square-toed calfskin shoes. On the contrary, he is a well dressed, cordial, self-contained and prosperous six-footer. By profession he is a lawyer. His clients have been the ironmakers of Birmingham. Some of his own money is invested in furnace shares. He is not a free trader within the definition ordinarily given that term, but a tariff reformer, opposed, he declares, to duties that prohibit importations and thus "protect the profits of manufactures."

OSCAR W. UNDERWOOD.

In a word, the tariff on anything made in this country, he thinks, should equal the differences in wages here and abroad, but should not be a penny more. Indeed, he is a Sam Randall type of Democrat, and not such a Democrat as was Roger Q. Mills before he discovered oil. His methods, opinions and personality ought to be interesting and important now and in the future. If the country goes Democratic next year, he will have given coherence and expression to the one commanding issue of the campaign, and after that there will be an Underwood tariff law written into the statute books of the United States.

"When," I asked him, "will you begin work on your proposed tariff measures?"

"Immediately after Congress adjourns on March 4 this year there are to be fourteen Democrats on the new Ways and Means Committee, seven from the South and seven from the North. Mr. Payne and the present committee had prolonged hearings eighteen months ago, manufacturers, importers and others coming here from all parts of the country. Each speaker appearing before the committee was questioned by both Republicans and Democrats. With the information then obtained either a protective or a revenue bill could have been written. So we shall go ahead without any further hearings. We have all the facts that are necessary and they are late enough for our purpose.

"I shall call the Democrats together early in March and ask them carefully to review the printed record of the Payne hearings. We shall remain in Washington until next December, with the exception of the two hot months of mid-summer. We plan, when Congress meets again, to have several of our bills ready for introduction in the House of Representatives. It is not our intention to write a general bill, but to prepare bills covering certain important schedules—one for cotton, perhaps, another for wool, and such others as we may think to be necessary. The number of bills will depend on circumstances.

"The Payne-Aldrich law describes and taxes 2,024 separate articles, ranging in size from a spool of thread to the heaviest kinds of machinery. The language of the law is often extremely technical. In the time allowed for consideration such a bill is beyond the full comprehension of anybody. If we bring in a measure revising the duties on woollen manufactures it will be fully explained to the last detail, passed and sent to the Senate. The same methods will be followed with each of the other bills as they come along for discussion. Members of Congress will get all the facts, obscurities will be made plain and the country will be thoroughly informed."

"Birmingham, where you live," I said, "is altogether a manufacturing city."

"Yes. When I went there in 1884 to practise law it had 5,000 inhabitants. When I was first elected to Congress, in 1894, it had 30,000 inhabitants. The last census gives it a population of 132,000. Twenty years hence it will be larger than Pittsburg, so I predict, and greater than that city as a centre of the iron and steel trade.

"The cost of assembling our materials for ironmaking is about 60 cents a ton. In some instances it is only 30 cents a ton. I asked Judge Gary, of the United States Steel Corporation, when he came to the Payne hearings, if he thought the south shore of Lake Erie the most economical region in the North for the production of pig iron. He said that he believed it was. There was a long haul for coal, he declared, but that was equalized by a shorter haul, as compared with Pittsburg, for Lake Superior ore. Pittsburg transports its ore for one thousand miles by water and rail. We can produce pig iron for $9 a ton, as against $12 50 a ton in Pittsburg. All things considered, iron is more easily and cheaply made in Birmingham than anywhere else in the world. That is the reason Birmingham is to be one of the largest cities in the United States. With the development of the South and Southwest, all of our finished products—pipe, rails and so on—will be consumed right at home. James J. Hill has bought steel rails in Birmingham, and we have been shipping pipe abroad for years. The South, with its rich soil, will have two great industries in the future—agriculture and manufactures."

"Will Alabama then divide politically on economic questions?" I inquired.

"Not so long as the negroes dominate the Republican party. The white men, with few exceptions, are Democrats. In some Alabama counties there are not ten white Republicans all told. Mr. Taft got only two votes in Wilcox County, and they were cast, I suppose, by negroes who met the educational and property requirements of our constitution. All the white men in Alabama stand together. Republicans from the North turn Democrats, even on national issues. If the negroes could be eliminated from our politics there would be two parties. As it is, there is only one. A white Republican party was started, but Roosevelt broke it up."

The Underwoods, as an American family, originated in Virginia. Joseph Rogers Underwood, a cousin of General George Rogers Clark, the famous Indian fighter and the grandfather of the Birmingham lawyer, settled in Kentucky. He also fought Indians, was wounded and captured and ran the gantlet. After holding many high offices he became Henry Clay's colleague in the United States Senate. The father of Oscar W. Underwood was a successful lawyer in Louisville. In 1895, when Oscar W. was three years old, the family removed to St. Paul. "We went there," he said, "because my mother had tuberculosis. The doctor said she might recover in the cold, dry climate of the Northwest. She was so ill that she was taken part of the way on a mattress. The advice of the doctor was good. My mother is alive to-day. She is seventy-nine years old.

"We lived in St. Paul for about twelve years. The headquarters of General Winfield S. Hancock, commander of that military district, was next door to our house. I speak of my life in the Northwest because since I was a boy, and I am only forty-eight years of age now, that whole region has emerged from the woods and wild grass and become one of the richest regions in the world. Since then, too, I have seen Birmingham grow from a little village into a modern city. The last time I was in St. Paul there were long lines of palatial residences where once I hunted ducks.

"Why did you begin practice in Alabama?"

"Principally for sentimental reasons. My family wanted me to remain in the South. However, I moved to St. Paul, but before I got my first client I packed my belongings and departed for Birmingham, where I had a brother in the iron business. The development of Birmingham began in 1880. A year later my brother went there and built a furnace. He obtained a place for me with an important law firm. Presently I was taken into the partnership. My life since leaving college has been divided into two parts—I practised law for ten years and for sixteen years I have been in Congress."

"My grandmother says they used to have barn dances in her day."

"I see the idea. Now, why couldn't we get up a garage hop?"—Washington Herald.